

III. REMARKS

In the present application, Claims 1-88 were originally filed and Claims 26-88 were cancelled prior to examination by the Examiner. Thus, Claims 1-25 are currently pending. In the above Amendments, Claims 1-8 and 10 have been amended, and new Claims 89-106 have been added to further claim various novel aspects and features of the invention which were not set forth in originally filed Claims 1-25. Further, the "BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION" section has been amended as indicated to more clearly describe the prior art, and to delete the description of specific prior art references. The description of specific prior art references has been deleted because the inventors believe the entire references cannot adequately be described in one or two sentences, and would be more thoroughly understood by the Examiner if the Examiner comes to his or her own conclusion about the particular references.

The Examiner issued the following rejections and/or objections:

1. Claims 2, 3, 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being purportedly anticipated by the Taheri '458 patent ("the Taheri patent" or "Taheri");
2. Claims 1, 5 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being purportedly obvious over the Taheri patent alone;
3. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being purportedly obvious over Taheri in view of the Gelfund et al. '800 patent ("the Gelfund patent" or "Gelfund");
4. Claims 9 and 16-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being purportedly obvious over Taheri in view of the Tobler et al. '556 patent ("the Tobler patent" or "Tobler"); and
5. Claims 10-15 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim; but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

With respect to the Examiner's §102(b) anticipation rejection of Claims 2, 3, 6 and 7 under the Taheri patent, Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection based on the amendments and remarks herein. Each of these claims has been amended to simply clarify that the present

invention utilizes bladders which substantially encircle a portion of the body part that the garment encloses. The device disclosed in Taheri, however, discloses only that the bladders “do not extend more than about one-half the width of their respective cuffs so as to confine them substantially to the area of the soft tissue proximate the deep veins which they are to press against.” (See Taheri at col. 3, lns. 6-10). Because Taheri does not disclose every element of Claims 2, 3, 6 or 7, these claims are not anticipated by Taheri.

Furthermore, with respect to Claim 2, it is respectfully submitted that Taheri fails to disclose a notch on at least one lateral side of the garment for providing a snug fit to the user, as required by amended Claim 2. In addition, with respect to Claim 3, it is respectfully submitted that Taheri fails to teach a pocket along substantially the entire length of at least one lateral side of the garment. For at least each of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner’s §102(b) anticipation rejections of Claims 2, 3, 6 and 7 under Taheri be withdrawn.

With respect to the Examiner’s §103(a) obviousness rejection of Claims 1, 5 and 8 under Taheri, Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection based on the amendments and remarks herein. Similar to Claims 2, 3, 6 and 7 (as discussed above), Claims 1, 5 and 8 have also been amended to clarify that the present invention utilizes bladders which substantially encircle a portion of the body part that the garment encloses. As explained above, the device disclosed in Taheri discloses only that the bladders “do not extend more than about one-half the width of their respective cuffs so as to confine them substantially to the area of the soft tissue proximate the deep veins which they are to press against.” (See Taheri at col. 3, lns. 6-10). This statement in Taheri actually teaches away from Applicant’s claimed invention. Because it is not obvious in view of Taheri to include bladders which substantially encircle a portion of the body part being massaged, Claims 1, 5 and 8 are not invalid under Taheri.

Furthermore, with respect to Claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that it would not be an obvious design choice to include bladders with approximately equal inflation volumes, as asserted by the Examiner. In fact, because different portions of the calf and foot area are different sizes, it was conventional in the prior art to utilize different sized bladders to accommodate such different sized calf and foot portions. This is especially true where the bladders completely encircle a portion of the body part (as clarified in the pending claims), as each portion of a calf and/or foot typically have different circumferences. In addition, with respect to Claim 5, it is respectfully submitted that it would not be obvious in view of Taheri to have an inflation assembly which supplies a substantially constant inflation capacity to each of the bladders. This is true in light of the foregoing argument that it would not be obvious to have bladders with approximately equal volumes – if the volumes are different, then the inflation capacity supplied to each such bladder would be different. Further, with respect to Claim 8, it is respectfully submitted that it would not have been an obvious design choice to include a zone selector, as such a feature requires more complex electronics and controlling which would not otherwise be needed in a device with a single zone. For at least each of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner's §103(a) obviousness rejection of Claims 1, 5 and 8 under Taheri be withdrawn.

With respect to the Examiner's §103(a) obviousness rejection of Claim 4 under Taheri in view of Gelfund, Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection based on the amendments and remarks herein. Similar to Claims 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 (as discussed above), Claim 4 has also been amended to clarify that the present invention utilizes bladders which substantially encircle a portion of the body part that the garment encloses. As explained above, the device disclosed in Taheri discloses only that the bladders “do not extend more than about one-half the width of their

respective cuffs so as to confine them substantially to the area of the soft tissue proximate the deep veins which they are to press against.” (See Taheri at col. 3, lns. 6-10). Similarly, in Gelfund, the single bladder disclosed in Figures 1A-C and 2A-C extends across only part of the width of the garment. Because it is not obvious under Taheri in view of Gelfund to include bladders which substantially encircle a portion of the body part being massaged, Claim 4 is not invalid under the combination of these two references. Thus, for at least this reason, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner’s §103(a) obviousness rejection of Claim 4 under Taheri in view of Gelfund be withdrawn.

Furthermore, even if Gelfund did, in fact, disclose a handle as recited in Claim 4 (which Applicants do not believe it does), it is respectfully submitted that there is no suggestion or motivation to combine Gelfund with Taheri to create the invention recited in Claim 4.

In addition, it is respectfully submitted that Gelfund does not even constitute analogous art, and thus cannot be relied upon for a §103 obviousness rejection. “The examiner must determine what is ‘analogous prior art’ for the purpose of analyzing the obviousness of the subject matter at issue.” MPEP §2141.01(a). “In order to rely on a reference as a basis for rejection of an applicant's invention, the reference must either be in the field of applicant's endeavor or, if not, then be reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the inventor was concerned.” *In re Oetiker*, 977 F.2d 1443, 1446 (Fed. Cir. 1992). “Analogous art is that which is relevant to a consideration of obviousness under section 103.” *Wang Laboratories, Inc. v. Toshiba Corp.*, 26 USPQ2d 1767 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

In *Wang*, the patent at issue discloses a single in-line memory module (SIMM) containing nine memory chips, eight for storing data and one for error detection, mounted in a single row. The prior art reference in question disclosed a SIMM for use in a 9-bit programmable controller

consisting of nine memory chips encapsulated in ceramic dual in-line packages mounted on an epoxy-glass printed circuit board substrate. The Federal Circuit explained,

The [reference] is not in the same field of endeavor as the claimed subject matter merely because it relates to memories. It involved memory circuits in which modules of varying sizes may be added or replaced; in contrast, the subject patents teach compact modular memories. . . . [The patentee's] SIMMs were designed to provide compact computer memory with minimum size, low cost, easy repairability, and easy expandability. . . . In contrast, the [prior art] patent relates to a memory circuit for a larger, more costly industrial controller. SRAMs were used [in the prior art technology] because of their intended industrial environment. According to [patentee's expert], size was not a consideration in the [prior art] work. Thus, there is substantial evidence in the record to support a finding that the . . . prior art is not reasonably pertinent and is not analogous.

Wang, 26 USPQ2d at 1773.

In *Oetiker*, the Federal Circuit stated, "It has not been shown that a person of ordinary skill, seeking to solve a problem of fastening a hose clamp, would reasonably be expected or motivated to look to fasteners for garments. The combination of elements from non-analogous sources, in a manner that reconstructs the applicant's invention only with the benefit of hindsight, is insufficient to present a *prima facie* case of obviousness." *Oetiker*, 24 USPQ2d at 1446.

Similar to *Wang* and *Oetiker*, the Gelfund reference, unlike the present application, is not in the field of massaging garments or devices. Rather, Gelfund discloses a vest design for cardiopulmonary resuscitation ("CPR"). A device used for CPR is neither in the field of the Applicants' invention nor reasonably pertinent to the Applicants' invention. It is therefore inappropriate to rely on Gelfund as a basis for rejection of the pending claims. Accordingly, for at least each of the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw his §103 obviousness rejection of Claim 4 under Taheri in view of Gelfund.

With respect to the Examiner's §103(a) obviousness rejection of Claims 9 and 16-25 under Taheri in view of Tobler, Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection based on the amendments and remarks herein. Similar to Claims 1-8 (as discussed above), Claims 9 and 16-25, each of which depend either directly or indirectly from independent Claim 1, also require that the claimed invention utilize bladders which substantially encircle a portion of the body part that the garment encloses. As explained above, the device disclosed in Taheri discloses only that the bladders "do not extend more than about one-half the width of their respective cuffs so as to confine them substantially to the area of the soft tissue proximate the deep veins which they are to press against." (See Taheri at col. 3, lns. 6-10). This statement actually teaches away from the limitation of Claim 1 that the bladders substantially encircle a portion of the body part that the garment encloses, and so it would not have been obvious to include the wider bladders of Tobler in Taheri.

Furthermore, as explained above, it is respectfully submitted that it would not be an obvious design choice to include bladders with approximately equal inflation volumes, as required by independent Claim 1 (from which each of Claims 9 and 16-25 depend). Thus, since neither Taheri nor Tobler discloses multiple bladders having approximately equal inflation volume, and such a feature is not an obvious design choice, none of Claims 9 and 16-25 would be obvious over Taheri in view of Tobler. For at least each of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner's §103(a) obviousness rejection of Claims 9 and 16-25 under Taheri in view of Tobler be withdrawn.

Finally, with respect to the Examiner's objection to Claims 10-15 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, Applicants have rewritten Claim 10 in independent form to include all of the limitations of Claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this objection be

withdrawn, and independent Claim 10 as amended, in addition to dependent Claims 11-15, be allowed.

IV. CONCLUSION

The inventors respectfully request that the foregoing amendments and remarks be entered and considered by the Examiner with respect to the above-identified application.

Please direct any questions to the undersigned attorneys for Applicant.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Alison Schwartz", written over a horizontal line.

Jordan A. Sigale (Reg. No. 39,028)
Alison P. Schwartz (Reg. No. 43,863)
SONNENSCHN, NATH & ROSENTHAL
8000 Sears Tower
Chicago, IL 60606
PH: 312-876-8000
FAX: 312-876-7934
Attorneys for Applicants

Version Of Amendment To Specification With Markings To Show Changes Made:

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A massage has long been recognized as a pleasant means of treating stress, muscular aches, fatigue and other symptoms associated with an active life. A professional masseuse is typically employed to provide a massage and this professional is trained to provide pressure sensations by squeezing or kneading muscles or muscle groups in a certain way. Also, a professional masseuse will adapt the massaging technique to the person being massaged. For example, the masseuse will vary the time, intensity (*i.e.*, pressure level), the order of pressure sensations and/or the temperature of massage oil to accommodate a person's massage needs on a particular day. Furthermore, the hands of the masseuse are adaptable to fit almost every size person.

A massage applied by a professional masseuse is almost universally considered wonderful. However, the cost of having a professional masseuse constantly on call for periodic massages is outside most people's [price range] budgets. For most people, a massage by a professional masseuse is only an occasional indulgence although our active lives justify more frequent[, and perhaps daily,] massages].

[In the past, massage devices have been developed for medical purposes. For example, U.S. Patent No. 5,014,681 to Neeman discloses an apparatus for applying intermittent compression to a body part "for the purpose of stimulating blood flow in the limb so as to prevent pooling or stasis of blood in a bedridden patient or, alternatively for the purpose of treating edema, *i.e.*, the excessive accumulation of fluid in body fluids."

U.S. Patent No. 4,762,121 to Shienfeld discloses a device for massaging the limbs of a body that is "particularly useful in the treatment of lymphatic disorders, such as congenital or

secondary lymphedema in order to reduce excessive accumulation of fluids in the body tissue."

Other possible applications for the Shienfeld device are "in the treatment of venous disorders, such as painful varicose veins, chronic venous insufficiency, an ulcer cruris" and "in the treatment of paralysis of the lower limbs because of long-standing muscular inactivity, and in the prevention of deep vein thrombosis during and after surgical operations."

U.S. Patent Nos. 5,245,990 and 5,383,842 to Bertinin discloses an apparatus "for improving or enhancing venous circulation in persons having venous insufficiencies and for providing muscular massage to prevent muscle atrophy" thereby "to facilitate rehabilitations of injured body parts by promoting venous body flow."

U.S. Patent No. 5,109,832 to Proctor discloses a medical apparatus "to apply compressive forces to a portion of a body for the therapeutic purpose of enhancing venous blood flow to prevent venous thrombosis and pulmonary embolism in surgical patients."

U.S. Patent No. 5,052,377 to Frajdenrajch discloses an apparatus "adapted to be arranged in contact with a part of the body of a patient in order to achieve thereon a succession of local pressures progressing in the direction of lymphatic drainage to be effectuated."

U.S. Patent No. 5,022,387 to Hasty discloses an antiembolism stocking for applying compressive pressures against a patient's limb to counteract pooling or stasis of blood which is particularly pronounced "during surgery, immediately after surgery, and when the patient has been confined to bed for extended periods of time." U.S. Patent No. 4,029,087 to Dye discloses a device designed for similar purposes.

U.S. Patent No. 4,865,020 to Bullard discloses a medical apparatus to improve blood movement to improve capillary circulation and which "may be useful in those conditions in which there is inadequate blood circulation, including Alzheimer's disease (lack of brain blood

circulation), kidney malfunctions, and blood capillary circulatory problems, such as loss of hair color and loss of hair growth."

U.S. Patent No. 5,092,317 to Zelikovski discloses a method for use by "on the limbs of sportsmen, athletes, dancers, etc. after having being subject to extreme exertion." The effective purpose of the Zelikovski invention is "to squeeze or milk out from the muscle the generated and accumulated metabolites" and "to accelerate the normal venous return flow so as to accelerate the evacuation/dissipation of the thus squeezed out metabolites."

The massage devices discussed above have many different designs tailored for their particular medical objective. Many of these devices include a garment for enclosing the body part and an inflation assembly. The garment has a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part; and the inflation assembly supplies fluid pressure to each of the bladders to inflate the respective bladders.]

In the past, massaging devices have been developed for relaxation and leisure purposes. These massaging devices generally function in a vibratory manner to create a vibrating sensation on various muscles of the body. However, these vibratory devices are generally not as satisfying as a human massage because, among other reasons, they do not provide a comparable amount of pressure, and they often create an undesired tingling sensation on the user's skin.

Also in the past, compression devices have been developed for medical purposes. These prior art compression devices are generally used in a hospital setting where trained medical personnel are available to insure proper functioning of the device and a proper fit of the garments/sleeves on the patient. Such prior art compression devices use very large inflatable bladders which cover large areas of a limb, their control units are large and cumbersome, and they operate to provide a very slow massaging action (for example, on the order of tens of

seconds to inflate each bladder) and thus do not provide a dynamic massaging effect.

Additionally or alternatively, in such a medical setting, it may be practical to have an inventory of sleeves/garments of different sizes to accommodate a variety of patient sizes. Further, the size and appearance of inflation tubing and/or the complexity of the set-up of such tubing does not present any issues in a medical setting, where a trained medical professional is present or available. As for the inflation assembly, complicated and expensive fluid-providing and/or distributing components are common place in these prior art medical devices.

The inventor of the present invention appreciated that a relatively simple, inexpensive massage device intended for relaxation and other personal, non-medical uses in an unsupervised and unattended setting (such as in-home use) could have many advantages and applications. The inventor further appreciated, however, that many of the features of prior art compression devices which are acceptable in a supervised medical setting, would not be satisfactory in such an unsupervised and unattended setting.

[The garments/sleeves of these prior art devices probably perform acceptably well for their intended uses. Specifically, for example, since the device is used in a hospital setting, trained medical personnel are available to insure a proper fit of the garments/sleeves on the patient. Additionally or alternatively, in such a medical setting, it may be practical to have an inventory of sleeves/garments of different sizes to accommodate a variety of patient sizes. Further, the appearance of inflation tubing and/or the set-up of such tubing usually does not present any issues in a medical setting. As for the inflation assembly, complicated fluid-providing components and/or distributing components are common place in medical settings.

The inventor appreciated that a massage device intended for use in an unsupervised and unattended setting (such as in-home use) could have many advantages and applications. The

inventor further appreciated, however, that many of the features of a massage device which are perfectly acceptable in a supervised medical setting, would not be satisfactory in an unsupervised and unattended setting.]

In the Claims:

1. (Amended) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which supplies fluid pressure to each of the bladders to inflate the respective bladders;

wherein each of the bladders has approximately the same inflated volume thereby equalizing the inflation volume of the respective bladders whereby substantially even inflation timing, with substantially even applied pressure, and, thus, overall smooth massage dynamics may be provided without overly complicated inflation fluid control.

2. (Amended) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which supplies fluid pressure to each of the bladders to inflate the respective bladders;

wherein the garment is shaped to accommodate the lower leg portion of the user's body, wherein bottom bladders massage the user's foot and top bladders massage the user's calf, and wherein the sheets include a notch on [each] at least one lateral side of the garment separating the bottom bladders from the top bladders whereby the garment may provide a snug fit to user.

3. (Amended) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which supplies fluid pressure to each of the bladders to inflate the respective bladders;

wherein the garment includes a pocket along substantially the entire length of at least one lateral side of the garment having an opening communicating with the respective bladders and wherein the inflation assembly including a source of inflation fluid and tubing extending from this source into the pocket.

4. (Amended) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which supplies fluid pressure to each of the bladders to inflate the respective bladders;

wherein the garment includes a loop fastening strip and a complimentary hook fastening strip which, when engaged with each other, form a hook-and-loop attachment;

wherein the loop fastening strip is secured to the inner sheet and the hook fastening strip is secured to the outer sheet;

wherein the loop fastening strips is secured to the inner sheet laterally inward from pull handles and over and laterally beyond a tubing pocket and wherein the hook fastening strip is secured to the outer sheet adjacent its longitudinal edge.

5. (Amended) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which supplies a substantially constant inflation capacity to each of the bladders.

6. (Amended) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which selectively inflates and deflates the bladders;

wherein, during deflation of the bladders, the inflation fluid flows through exhaust lines and wherein at least some of the exhaust lines include a throttling device.

7. (Amended) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which selectively inflates and deflates the bladders;

wherein inflation of a bladder is underway prior to complete deflation of the previously inflated bladder.

8. (Amended) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which selectively inflates and deflates the bladders;

wherein the inflation assembly includes a zone selector which allows a user to select a certain zone of the garment.

10. (Amended) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which supplies fluid pressure to each of the bladders to inflate the respective bladders;

wherein each of the bladders has approximately the same inflated volume thereby equalizing the inflation volume of the respective bladders whereby substantially even inflation timing, with substantially even applied pressure, and, thus, overall smooth massage dynamics may be provided without overly complicated inflation fluid control; and

[A massage device as set forth in claim 9,]wherein necking seams are positioned relative to certain bladders to provide at least some of the bladders with approximately the same inflated volume.

Added Claims:

89. An inflatable garment for use in association with an inflation assembly comprising a plurality of inflation bladders to apply pressure to a body part, wherein each of the bladders substantially encircles a portion of the body part, and each of the bladders has approximately the same inflated volume.

90. An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 89 wherein, when inflated, each of the bladders apply substantially equal pressure to the body part.

91. An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 89, wherein the garment is made of two opposing sheets and wherein seams between the sheets define the bladders.

92. An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 91, wherein necking seams are positioned relative to one or more bladders to create corresponding necked bladders, wherein the bladders which are not necked bladders are unnecked bladders, and wherein the necking seams are intended to decrease the inflated volume of the necked bladders.

93. An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 92, wherein the shape of the necked bladders is substantially similar to the shape of the unnecked bladders.

94. An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 93, wherein the shape of the necked bladders is substantially rectangular.

95. An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 93, wherein the inflatable garment is shaped to accommodate a lower leg portion of a user, and wherein top bladders which encircle a user's calf are necked bladders, and bottom bladders which encircle the user's foot are unnecked bladders.

96. An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 89, wherein the inflatable garment is shaped to accommodate a lower leg portion of a user, and wherein the garment includes a notch on each lateral side which separate the bladders into one or more bottom bladders and one or more top bladders.

97. An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 89, wherein the inflatable garment includes a pocket having one or more openings for communicating with the respective bladders, and wherein the massage device further includes inflation tubing extending from the inflation assembly into the pocket.

98. An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 97, wherein the inflatable garment is shaped to accommodate a lower leg portion of a user, wherein the garment includes a notch on each lateral side which separate the bladders into one or more bottom bladders and one or more top bladders, and wherein the pocket includes one or more slots adjacent one of the notches to provide an entry passage for the inflation tubing into a top portion and a bottom portion of the pocket.

99. A massage device for use in an unsupervised and unattended setting, the massage device comprising:

an inflatable garment having a plurality of inflation bladders to apply pressure to a body part wherein each of the bladders has approximately the same inflated volume;

an inflation assembly for providing pressurized fluid to the bladders to the respective bladders; and

means for equalizing inflation volume of each of the bladders.

100. A massage device as set forth in claim 99 further comprising means for equalizing inflation time of each of the bladders.

101. A massage device as set forth in claim 99 further comprising means for equalizing applied pressure of each of the bladders.

102. A massage device for use in an unsupervised and unattended setting, the massage device comprising:

an inflatable garment having a plurality of inflation bladders to apply pressure to a body part;

an inflation assembly for providing pressurized fluid to the bladders to the respective bladders; and

means for providing a snug fit of the inflatable garment on a user.

103. A method of massaging a body part in an unsupervised and unattended setting, the method comprising:

providing an inflatable garment having a plurality of inflation bladders to apply pressure to a body part wherein each of the bladders has approximately the same inflated volume;

inflating the bladders;

deflating the bladders; and

equalizing inflation volume of each of the bladders.

104. A method of massaging a body part as set forth in claim 103 further comprising equalizing inflation time of each of the bladders.

105. A method of massaging a body part as set forth in claim 103 further comprising equalizing applied pressure of each of the bladders.

106. A method of massaging a body part in an unsupervised and unattended setting, the method comprising:

providing an inflatable garment having a plurality of inflation bladders to apply pressure to a body part;

inflating the bladders;

deflating the bladders; and

providing a snug fit of the inflatable garment on a user.